Hal — Whether Jerry's theory is valid or not, this comment by the psychiatrist who coined the word "psychedelic" (in 1957) may be interesting. Best, Walter 4-27-78

from Dr. Humphry Osmond

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(Prompted by Diane Judge column, NY Post, 1/11/

THE CONTINUING MYSTERY OF THE JFK ASSASSINATION, AND A GENERAL UNWILLIN TO CONFRONT THE OBVIOUS.

As the co-author of a play (with Frank McEnaney), "To Covet Honour, which views Lee Harvey Oswald in a slightly different light, my "conversion" to Jerome Agel's theory of the JFK assassination has s weight. I still think our view of Lee HO, which is not wholly incompatible with Agel's, is psychologically more elegant. I think the evidence supports his hypothesis. Most impressive of all the d is the fact that had Lee HO been aiming at JFK with that rifle and there could not have been an assination, although someone in the admiring crowds might have been hurt or even killed.

Lee HO had only six human targets in the Presidential car. The dri and another Secret Service man, the two Connallys, and JFK and Ja As a matter of fact, Connally is a possibility, and it would be interesting to work out where those shots would have gone had they been aimed at the Texas governor. By far the most accessible targets were the two Kennedys. It is quite likely that apart from Connally no other victim was considered -- Marina has always said LHO was the assassin, but was not aiming at the President -- becau traditionally in the USA assassins shoot men. In Europe, of course people would be much less surprised if an attempt was made on a f head of state or upon the female consort of a male head. There are still people who can remember Sarajevo.

Part of Marc Jaffe's theory of a "conspiracy of silence" may well be a maxtur of sexism, chivalry, and lack of imagination: combined with the thought that LHO could not have been unsporting enough to shoot a woman.

However, the resistance to Jerome Agel's brilliant rethinking of

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becomes painfully evident. This I believe is a major source of resistance to the Agel hypothesis. The planners and determinists very unwilling to admit for a moment that history is unpredictable. Yet who could have predicted LHO. After the event, perhaps, but post-prediction, although wonderfully xertain, is a little shabby and even silly. JFK's friends and enemies alike would be most unwilling to believe that this interesting and lively man died because of a mistake. It is not at all easy to guard against mistakes.

Then there is inertia, simple or complex, starting with the Warren Commissioners. I don't know how many of them are still alive after more than fourteen years, but it would not be easy for anyone of them to admit to such a massive error. They had all the facts presented to them, and had to do little or none of the painful digging through their own voluminous report. They began, as most of us began anything, with a set of assumptions, and those assumptions were that whoever fired the gun intended to kill JFK. (The Mayor of Chicago was killed in Miami in 1933, but no one in that instance claimed that he was the target — he was sitting beside President-elect F.D.R.) This was a common sense assumption that was, however, refuted by the ballistic experts and the gun experts. It was at that point that everything began to go astray. If Lee HO was intending to kill JFK and aimed at him, then he must have missed him.

Experiments by set theorists such as Ashe have shown how hard it is to break a set once it has become accepted. It is not hard to see why the press steers clear of the "Jackie theory," for who would be the first at whom criticism should be levelled

as the rest of us. The press do have bouts of self-criticism fro time to time, but this particular affair would require more heroism on the part of the press than was shown over Watergate. Indeed, some might feel that such self-sacrifice might come clos to masochism.

If one adopts the Agel theory, then one has to forgo a host of other theories, which have become a middle-sized industry over the last 14 years or so. The Agel theory is incompatible with these other explanations. There must be millions of dollars changing hands yearly in support of the various conspiratorial theories. The present fashion seems to be to find retired agents from the C.I.A., KGB, etc., and help them to refresh their memories for a little honorarium. Purveyors of such information presumably want to remain more or less anonymous, so that author must meet them under unusual and exciting circumstances.

I am not sure how many books, apart from the Warren Commission Report, have been published on the JFK Assassination, but it car be less than one hundred. The subject must be a useful ~~publisher's standby; when in doubt, another book on the assinatio~~ is likely to get its quota of readers.

As I have noted in another memo of this date, dealing with the affair, one might expect the F.B.I. at least to have made beti use of its data, which, properly used, would have clinched the issue. I suspect that J. Edgar Hoover considered the matter resolved by the Warren Commission Report. In his opinion, he ha convinced the right people and not much else mattered. He was a seclusive old bachelor, married to his Bureau, and secure in th knowledge that his files had the dirt on everybody. He felt tha

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country's and his bureau's benefit. In his mind the two would be synonymous.

Hoover was not a mind preoccupied with the hypothetical; if the President was shot, he was shot and if the man who shot him was found, then that was that. The whys and wherefores were of no interest to him, and therefore ofno interest to the loyal members of his bureau. Those who disagreed with his views were by definition no good, immoral, frivolous, interfering.

We do not know why the Warreneers worried so little about LHO's motives, but one factor in their failing to do so must have be the form and emphasis of the FBI investigation. The case was s because there was no conspiracy, not because Oswald's actions had become one jot more comprehensible. The little attentio paid to the psychiatric evidence happened in this case to be crucial, unlike the Hiss case, where what the psychiatrists contributed threw little on that mysterious affair.

It was essential that Oswald's actions should make sense to o people, if the Commission's report was to be useful to the ry. Oswald's hatred of women, his recent rebuffs from them, a fact that he must have been aiming at Jackie Kennedy (Marina thought Jackie was "a goddess") raises the simple question, W There is a simple answer: If you aim a gun at someone, maybe intention is to kill that someone.

This was not so much rejected or suppressed as determinedly r Why not? Male pride, I fear. Who would want to kill JBK? Lar numbers of women get murdered in the US every year, and ther reason why Jackie should not have been the target of an assa (She was extremely well known and popular.) There is strong

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that she was, but this was not the kind of crime that the W.C., the FBI, and the CIA thought they were up against. Interestingly enough, there is other evidence to support this blindness to certain kinds of motives as regards Jack Ruby. There is much evidence that Ruby was one of those slightly brutal romantics who might very well kill LHO to spare Jackie Kennedy embarrassment. It was an old-fashioned motive, but Jack Ruby was an old-fashioned man. However it has been thought much more interesting to present Ruby as part of a vast conspiracy, something he stoutly denied, because he was proud to have avenged Jackie.

Failure to show enough interest in the human beings involved in the JFK tragedy has resulted in that strange and moving event becoming a conspiratorial farce. Some of the responsibility for this must lie with the W.C., the FBI, and the CIA, all bodies dominated by high status males who collectively paid little or no attention to the feelings of those with whom they were communicating or attempting to communicate.

Perhaps the time is coming when the tragedy can be restored to its proper place. The accidental is no less part of the human condition and the human tragedy than that which is most intricately and exquisitely plotted. Indeef, if the very stuff of the universe is indeterminate, it should not surprise us or dismay us unduly if our lives are permeated by this same quality.